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## TABLE OF CONTENTS


Page

Editorial Comment ..... 2

Multiple Facets of the School Social Worker's Role:
Direct Help to Children and Parents
Clara M. Colteryahn..... 3- 9

Multiple Facets of the School Social Worker's Role:
Interpretation to Teachers through Group Conferences and Discussions
Leanora E. Pritchett.....10-16

Multiple Facets of the School Social Worker's Role:
School Social Work Consultation Service with Other School Personnel
Mrs. Mary J. Medler.....17-22

## EDITORIAL COMMENT

The articles in this issue entitled "Multiple Facets of the School Social Worker's Role", are several of the papers read at the NASSW section meeting of the National Conference of Social Work. Their value lies in the use they may serve in the interpretation of school social work to school administrators who may need or seek help in further understanding their service and/or to administrators who may wish to broaden the scope of service to that described by Miss Pritchett and Mrs. Medler. The school social worker has much to offer, not only in individual service to parents and children, but also in helping teachers as a group to an understanding of mental hygiene concepts through discussion of children-in-school.

# MULTIPLE FACETS OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER'S ROLE:

## Direct Help to Children and Parents[1]

CLARA M. COLTERYAHN, Supervisor of Home and School Visitors
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This facet of school social work is one of the most interesting because here one is face to face with the client, the child, who for one or many reasons is not able to be the happy child-in-school most children are. He[2] is not able to use what the school offers to the limit of his ability.

With the growth and development of social work, the increased understanding of the psychological development of children, and the change in educational philosophy to consideration of the individual needs of the child, school social work evolved as one way of helping this child-in-school. The answer seemed not to lie totally in the manipulation of the child's school environment, but through helping school personnel to understand the child and his needs, and through casework help for the child, and sometimes the parent, directed toward change to the point that the child could be a participating member of the school, academically and socially.

Because our referrals are all children-in-school, or children who have withdrawn from school, we may assume immediately that, regardless of the size of the school or size of the community, we have most of the essential elements of the helping team within the school—child, teacher, principal, school social worker. In many instances, the school social worker is the only person to whom the school may turn for help. Because the school historically is an accepted institution, many parents can use help from the school social worker, a person professionally identified with the school, who could not use service from a community resource. Parents who have experienced a satisfying casework relationship with the school social worker can more readily use a community

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[1] Presented as one of a group of papers on "Multiple Facets of the School Social Worker's Role" at the NASSW Section Meeting of the National Conference of Social Work, Cleveland, Ohio, June, 1953.

[2] For purposes of clarification, the feminine person is used to denote the school social worker, the masculine to denote the child, except in examples cited.

service, if and when the child's difficulty is centered in conflicts primarily outside the school, therefore beyond the school social worker's function. This paper, however, assumes that concurrently there is communication based upon a working relationship between the school social worker and teacher and principal, timed according to need. This paper also assumes that whatever psychological testing service, whether group or individual, exists within the school has been used in helping to understand the child's intellectual capacity and functioning.

Who, then, are the children referred to the school social worker? Probably the children who create the greatest concern to school personnel are those who are absent either because of truancy, neglect, or school phobia, and the children who present deviant behavior within the class room, on the playground, or on the way to and from school. Other children referred for service are those whose emotional difficulties interfere with their intellectual achievement, children who are neglected either physically or emotionally, intellectually retarded children, and finally, those children who are withdrawn, either too fearful to participate in class or too preoccupied with their daydreams to hear, except at intervals, what is going on about them in the classroom.

Repeating what has previously been stated, the function of the school social worker is to help the individual child to use what the school offers to the limit of his ability. Her focus is on helping the child to help himself, on helping school personnel to understand the child and to meet his needs as reflected in school, and on helping the parent to understand his child so that he may help his child with his adjustment in school. Her aim is to help the child more in relation to his school world than in relation to his deeper inner conflicts. These, however, are so inter-related that as the child's relationships in school are unravelled and improve, personality growth ensues and a consequent secondary gain may be improved social adjustment in all the child's interpersonal relationships. With improved relationships, the child's need to withdraw from school by truancy, other absence, aggressiveness, attention-seeking behavior, or day dreaming, is lessened to the point that he may be able to be a more active participant in the classroom.

How, then, is this service offered to the child? To the child whose picture of the teacher as an authoritative figure is colored by his own acceptance of discipline and limitations, the school social worker represents an entirely new experience. Understanding this difference is difficult because of his feeling toward authority as he relates it to all school

personnel. Thus, it is important that the child clearly understand the reason for referral and the service which the worker has to offer.

Once the child begins to understand that the school social worker is interested in him as a person, that she is not intent upon making him do something which he does not wish to do, he begins to develop an inner awareness of confidence and security and feels free to express himself. Through the relationship thus established, the child works through his problem.

This is best understood through illustrations taken from practice.

Percy is an eight-year-old boy of low average intelligence, second grade. He was referred because of his hyperactive and aggressive behavior in the classroom. He had spent at least three half-days weekly, for several months, in the office because of his disturbing behavior. He kept other children from doing their work; he used his fists. He seemed ready to discuss his behavior when approached by the worker. At the time of the following interview he had been absent for several weeks because of impetigo. When he returned, there was a substitute teacher in the room. Percy, who at this point was beginning to adjust, regressed. (Part of the eighth interview):

Percy came in a gay mood. He told me he had missed too much school because he caught impetigo from one of his aunts. He volunteered the information that he liked school and regretted having missed so much. He went on to say he has a substitute teacher now because Mrs. Vann is ill, and he has been giving her a "hard time". When I asked why, he said he "forgets his manners", then said it was hard for him to get used to somebody new. Further discussion revealed Percy's responsibility of collecting and distributing readers and placing the chairs for the reading groups had been assigned to someone else. He felt this very keenly and said he wasn't going to do anything to help until Mrs. Vann came back and he got his job again.

We discussed the need to meet and adjust to all kinds of new people, how hard it was for a new teacher with thirty-five children and how Percy needed to help. He decided it was hard to meet thirty-five new children and that he could help her by behaving but he held to his point by saying he would not help with any work about the classroom. (This can be clarified with the teacher.)

At this point, Percy got up and walked around the room, then re-arranged several chairs. This seemed to be his way of saying he didn't have the same feeling towards me. When he sat down again he said he was sorry he changed his mind about Cub Scouts. I said it was all right and added if he changed his mind again, he could still join a troop. He thought he might next year and hurried on to say he hadn't changed his mind about camp.

The next week Percy came in, announcing that he couldn't stay very long because he had to get back to his room to make a Mother's Day present. When I asked how he was getting along with his teacher, he looked up, smiled and said something happened after he went back to his room last week. When I asked

what, he could only say he didn't know, but he just suddenly got used to the teacher and decided to behave. He immediately asked if I knew he was "library boy" now. This meant he was responsible for passing out, collecting and keeping the library shelf in order. He was given this assignment last week and thinks it is wonderful. This, no doubt, had considerable to do with his change in attitude towards the teacher.

Percy is still thinking about camp, but has no idea what camp is, except that "it is different from home".

Another instance of how a child, age six and a half, average intelligence, tells the worker through words, mannerisms or play just what his problem is, in the following (part of seventh interview):

Glenn was a potential school phobia problem. He expressed extreme negativism towards his twin siblings, age four—he wanted to be home with them. He was chronically anxious.

Glenn responded throughout this interview in much the same way he had in all others. He made clay airplanes and most of the conversation was about planes. David, his brother, moved into a more favorable position. He became the co-pilot. Lindy, his sister, was hardly mentioned. In his play he bombed the school twice, making a total wreck of it. This led to a conversation around his feelings about school. He likes most things about school but "hates to write because it is too hard". He says he gets tired and mad when he has to write too much because he can't do it well. Much of Glenn's dislike about school seems centered around this area which is directly related to Dr. Jones', school physician's, recent diagnosis, "mild chorea", and which is being discussed with the mother today.

Throughout the interview, Glenn continued to work with clay, but I noted he was nervous and clumsy in his work and dropped the clay. His first plane had much more detail work on it than the second. He seemed able to keep himself under control only a short period. He then made school houses which he demolished with bombs and finally made three balls which represented his present teacher, his past teacher, and me. He smashed the two balls which represented the teachers with his fist, put them on top of each other, then carefully put my ball on top and said, "You're the butter on the pancakes". When I asked how I happened to be the butter, he said "Pancakes aren't any good without butter".

(In order to help Glenn, he had been returned to his former teacher, thus the referral to two teachers.)

My comment is, do children, given the opportunity, tell the worker, even in disguised ways, the pressures they are under within the home and school?

There are many instances in which help should be parent-centered rather than child-centered because the difficulty is primarily based on a faulty parent-child relationship. Dr. Lippman states, "The poor school

adjustments which bring children to the child guidance clinic are difficult to solve unless the attitudes and conflicts of the parents can be recognized and at least in part understood by them."[3] How true it is, too, of many children referred to the school social worker, children whose difficulties have not reached proportions to need psychiatric help. The school phobic child, particularly, is one in which interviews are held primarily with the parent; likewise, is this frequently true in cases of the very young child-in-school. Early diagnosis determines the worker's focus.

The major part of the worker's service, however, consists of periodic interviews with the parent, to help the worker understand the child and his situation, and to help the parent not only in his understanding of his child, but also to help him to support his child as he reaches forward in his growth and development in school.

Who are the parents of the children under discussion? For the most part, parents wish to be "good parents". This paper is narrowed to discussion of parents who can use help, or at least modify their attitudes to a point that the child reaches an adjustment in school, possibly not an adjustment that either of us would desire, but the best possible for that child at that particular point of his development.

Factors in the parent which usually interfere with the adequate functioning of the child-in-school are rejection, over-protection, demands for perfection, overanxiousness and anxiety.[4]

The following recording summarizes how one parent was helped to recognize the relationship between home and school and its effect on the child's school adjustment.

John, age eleven, is a sixth grade Negro boy of average intelligence whose school work had begun to drop below his capacity for achievement and whose citizenship was unsatisfactory to three teachers. The principal, in making the referral, had further described John as "having a chip on his shoulder", and while not openly involved, seemed to be in the background of every fight. She felt John's present behavior pointed towards delinquency and his attitude indicated there would be trouble once John reached junior high school. One teacher said John's work was not up to standard and that he had been spending considerable time day dreaming; another teacher said she had to remove John from his post on the Safety Patrol because of the many complaints about his annoying

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[3] p. 3, LIPPMAN, Hyman S., "The Role of Parents in Educational Problems Presented by Children in the School Setting," THE BULLETIN, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4.

[4] Ibid.

little children; another teacher described him as sullen, smirky and impossible—she was finding it useless to expect anything good from him.

During the time this case was active, October through March, four interviews were held with the mother who was employed. At first the mother was apprehensive but was willing to look at the child's situation. She approached the first interview with an awareness that John was having difficulty at school but was unable to understand why because he "was so willing to do everything at home". The interviews with Mrs. S. bore out John's statements that he was practically carrying the full responsibility of the home chores, that he was doing many more things than were expected of him and that "Mary continually skipped out leaving him stuck with her work". Even though he was doing more than was expected of him, his parents allowed this to go on because he was doing it voluntarily. They tried to reward him by buying additional parts for his trains and erector set, which his sisters used as much as he did, and by permitting him to escort his sisters to the movies, etc. They were completely unaware of the feeling of resentment this was developing. Mrs. S. was given an interpretation of John's apparent need to have everything "just right" at home, how he was trying to be overprotective of Mary, how he felt imposed upon and how all these found expression in acts of aggression and hostility toward other children and lack of interest in his school work.

In a following interview, Mrs. S. said she had made some observations of her own and had concluded our diagnosis of John was correct. She saw the need to remedy the situation. Since the position she now holds represents status she has always desired and is a fulfillment of her own need, she was not willing to give this up but was willing to examine the possibility of other adjustments. She arranged for John to have recreation which he did not have to share with his sisters. She attempted a plan to send the children to a relative's home for lunch. When this did not prove satisfactory, she tried having someone come in at noon to prepare lunch. This plan was fairly successful in defining a program of exactly what was expected of each of the children, in making Mary understand her manner of imposing on John had to come to an end, and in giving John the support he needed in doing his own chores and in leaving Mary's for her.

In the terminating interview several months later, Mrs. S. expressed her appreciation for the help she had been given. She said she had been unaware of what had been going on within John and was now able to see "there had to be a blow-up somewhere". She was sincere in saying she feared to think of the proportions this might have reached had it not been brought to her attention. She felt she now understood the difficulty, had found a way to meet it, and could carry on.

A recent evaluation of John's grades showed class work and citizenship satisfactory.

Although it is recognized that the service the school social worker offers is somewhat dependent on the school, the above examples are cited to demonstrate what is possible. It is the individual worker frequently who may choose the few children within the case load to whom she may

give more time so that a difficulty which could have far reaching consequences may be prevented, thus reaching toward the goal of school social work, preventive casework. The school is in a primary position to observe children and recognize damaging symptoms in their early stages and must be prepared to offer the help needed to bring about a change if it is to accept the goal set by the Mid-Century Conference on Children and Youth, "A Healthy Personality for Every Child".

## MULTIPLE FACETS OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER'S ROLE:

# Interpretation to Teachers through Group Conferences and Discussions[1]

LEANORA E. PRITCHETT, Assigned Supervisor of School Social Workers
Bureau of Child Guidance, Board of Education, New York City

With a ratio of one school social worker in the Bureau of Child Guidance to every 10,000 school children in the New York City schools, the Bureau cannot begin to meet the many calls for direct service. We therefore offer, in addition to direct treatment of parent and child, a program of interpretation whereby teachers participate with us in creating a good emotional climate within the school, in meeting with understanding children's basic emotional needs and in recognizing more readily children whose stresses call for help beyond that of the classroom teacher. The importance of the role played by the teacher in the lives of children in helping the latter toward healthy personality development cannot be overestimated. Modern education recognizes that relationship between teacher and child is an essential for learning; as the teacher becomes aware of mental hygiene implications, she can use her teaching relationship to further the child's personality growth and to help him toward a healthy acceptance of self and a healthy sharing with others.

Within the five boroughs of Greater New York allocation of staff from the Bureau of Child Guidance to each assistant superintendent's area is made on the basis of school population. In conference with the local superintendent a plan is worked out for the most effective use of the clinic team members including psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers assigned to his area, with variations from district to district depending upon the needs of the area. For the purpose of this paper we have limited our discussion to one role of the school social worker.

In September, 1950, when Dr. I. Victor Burger, assistant superintendent, conferred with the new clinic team assigned to his area, he requested that they concentrate their services in four schools, giving only mandatory, emergency, and consultation service to the remaining twenty-six schools. The two schools which the writer shared with the psy-

[1] Presented as one of a group of papers on "Multiple Facets of the School Social Worker's Role" at the NASSW Section Meeting of the National Conference of Social Work, Cleveland, Ohio, June, 1953.

chologist presented divergent problems. The one, P. S. 188, a kindergarten—9B school adjacent to the newly-opened Lillian Wald Housing Project, included a variety of racial, religious, and cultural groups, all of a low income level. The population of this school had suddenly been increased from 1,450 to 2,500 children with little opportunity for the school to adapt to this sudden expansion. Tensions between older residents of the neighborhood and newcomers within the project were at high pitch and sometimes found expression within the school grounds. The principal of this school asked help from the social worker in mobilizing community agencies to accept referrals and for individual and group conferences with his teachers focused toward better understanding and planning for the needs of children within the school.

P. S. 63, the second school assigned to the writer was a kindergarten-6B school with a registration of approximately 1,300 children predominantly from lower middle class homes. The principal of this school asked for a mental hygiene program which would enlist the participation of his teachers in understanding and meeting the emotional needs of children, with the hope of averting incipient problems and of steering children with more acute needs toward appropriate resources.[2]

Under the leadership of the principal, a guidance committee was set up composed of the assistant to principal, the Bureau of Child Guidance social worker and three teachers, each representing two of the growth levels in the school, namely kindergarten, first and second grades, third and fourth grades, and fifth and sixth grades. The principal set aside one hour each week during school time in which the guidance committee met to develop a mental hygiene point of view and to plan a mental hygiene program for the school.

In their early meetings, through the use of case material provided by the social worker, there was a review of the emotional needs of children at progressive stages in their personality development, common frustrations and behavior manifestations of failure in adaption. When the committee achieved a common understanding as a basis for good working relationships, under the leadership of the school social worker, an outline was developed which might serve as a guide and a stimulus

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[2] This type of program had previously been tried in a school in the East Harlem area under Dr. Clare Baldwin, Assistant Superintendent. Here the teachers' participation with the school social worker in group conferences, for studying and helping particular children through this teacher-pupil classroom relationship, as well as through the use of social agency resources, including the clinical program of the Bureau of Child Guidance, resulted in a decrease of 60% in truancy within the school.

to teachers throughout the school in studying individual children. The material which the teacher thought through about the child in accordance with the outline, was used as a basis either for individual conferences or for presentation before the guidance committee. In organizing her material about the child, the teacher often began to see certain cause and effect relationships operating to produce the child's behavior, and was able to move into a more helpful identification with the child. The individual conference with the social worker was used to help the teacher toward further understanding and to support the teacher's competence in her role in helping the child through classroom procedures. Our experience has been that as the teacher grows in her understanding of the child's fundamental needs, she herself is resourceful in developing classroom techniques for meeting these needs. Her earlier attitude of asking "What shall I do" changes to one of asking "How can I better understand?"

Certain situations were then selected for presentation before the guidance committee. The discussion of the problem here helped the teacher to move further into an objective evaluation of the child's behavior and to gain the acceptance of the group in expressing her feelings of frustration. Such acceptance served as an impetus in helping her to mobilize herself for a more positive approach to the child and his problems. The entire group began to move into realization of the concept that change comes slowly since personality has been in the making over a period of years, and they began to find greater satisfaction in limited goals for the child in place of hoping for perfectionistic and standardized patterns of behavior.

Time does not permit presenting in detail the outline developed by the guidance committee for studying the child. We can only touch upon the areas the teacher was asked to explore and outline our goals in stimulating her exploration.

1. After recording identifying data, the teacher was asked to give a succinct description and examples of the behavior of the child as she had observed it, bringing out those aspects which she felt constituted a problem for him or for others. This helped the teacher to focus the child's presenting behavior symptoms more objectively.

2. The teacher was next asked to assemble all the recorded data available within the school which would further her understanding of the child. This included data from the school nurse's health card concerning the child's physical status. It further included from the cumula-

tive record card findings on group or individual intelligence tests, results on achievement tests, the child's academic progress, personality evaluations by previous teachers, changes in schools, attendance and sequences in promotion. Sometimes a conference with the previous teacher brought out other data which helped in formulating a picture of the child's assets and liabilities.

3. As a further source of understanding the child, the teacher was asked to keep a running record of her day-to-day observations of the child within the following categories:

a. the child's relationships with the other children.

b. the child's relationships with the teacher.

c. the manner in which the child relates himself to materials and situations.

d. the child's use of leisure time after school.

4. Through parent-teacher conferences, an established procedure in the school, the teacher's understanding of the parent-child relationship and of the family's preoccupations with economic, health or marital problems, her understanding of the parents' educational drives as well as rivalry situations among the siblings, were further extended. The child's home and play interests were also elaborated in these conferences.

5. The teacher was then asked to outline a tentative plan for helping the child, both within the classroom and if appropriate, through the use of other resources.

With this background for understanding the child, the group usually moved into lively discussions, first directed toward deepening their understanding of the emotional needs of all children and then toward evolving a practical program for helping the particular child under discussion. Although the use of casework resources was frequently recommended, the teacher recognized that her role in helping the child through classroom procedures was one which could not be delegated. She also learned to see herself as a member of a casework or clinic team in working with the child. In many instances the support and increased understanding which the teacher gained from the guidance committee, enabled her to confer with the parent and to help the child to move into better social and learning relationships without the use of casework resources.

Alfred, a six-year-old boy in the first grade, lived alone with a physically handicapped mother who was supported by a fixed allowance. Since his father's

death, Alfred had been kept close to his mother and during her illness, he had had little opportunity for outside play or for use of play materials within the home. Through helping his mother, he had gained a sense of responsibility and had taken on the surface behavior of a little old man. With his entrance into the first grade where he became one of a group of thirty children, this adjustment broke down. He hungrily went after the play materials in the classroom and fought the other children for possession of more toys than he could possibly use. His aggression toward other children continued although he actively worked to gain the teacher's favor and was eager for praise. With the help of the guidance committee, the teacher sought for meanings of Alfred's behavior through conferences with his mother and through day-to-day observation and relationship with the child. It soon became apparent that Alfred had lacked normal childhood outlets for his aggression and had learned to relate only to adults, not to children. The teacher found for him opportunities for recognition which gave him a feeling of status in the group. She observed that when Alfred felt himself identified with an adult, he was better able to share. In addition to his monitorial duties in which he identified himself with her in doing things for the group, she gave him as much time as possible with a rhythm band and with bodily rhythms which he enjoyed. She also arranged for his attendance at a play group in the settlement house after school, preceded by a conference with the group's male leader. Alfred's ability to give up his earlier competitive feeling toward other children is evidenced by his attitude toward a later entrant whose panic at leaving his mother was such that for a period she remained in the classroom with him. One morning Alfred took this little boy by the hand and engaged him in play, leading him to various materials where he worked with him. After a period he advised the child, "You send your mother home, then she can do her shopping for your supper". For the first time the little boy agreed that his mother might leave and with the continued support of Alfred, the child has remained in school without difficulty. His teacher comments, "Alfred has gone a long way in his adjustment. His early aggressiveness now has become constructive leadership. Although some occasional hitting out continues, I now see this as a natural phase in his development."

As the meetings of the guidance committee continued, the group became responsible for a library shelf in the office of assistant to principal, where mental hygiene publications were made available to teachers throughout the school. A further development was the publication of a monthly mental hygiene sheet, prepared by the guidance committee and distributed by Superintendent Burger to all of the schools in the district.

A next step in the development of our group conferences was an after-school workshop for teachers from both P. S. 63 and P. S. 188, as well as from other schools in the districts, under the sponsorship of Superintendent Burger. Registration was limited to teachers either participating or planning to participate in a guidance committee for their school, twenty teachers in all.[3] The teachers' own material was again

[3] The course carried alertness credit and could also be used for application for a higher license.

used as a basis for case discussion, with focus upon the teacher's role in understanding and helping the child through his day-to-day classroom activities. A further contribution which the teachers made within the course, was the development of a directory of agency resources for the area, now used by all the schools in Superintendent Burger's districts.

In commenting on the course one teacher wrote, "Our class discussions served to replace the old idea that some children are out and out nuisances and should be handled in a punitive way, with a new point of view that behavior has a definite cause or set of causes and that in most instances the child can be cured or helped. The exploration of the total picture of a child's relationships, with discussion of ways in which the teacher could help was invaluable because each teacher participating was able to draw a parallel from her own classroom group. The workshop method used resulted in a feeling of working together to find solutions." The administrative support of Superintendent Burger and of his principals contributed in no small measure to the success of this program for teacher participation in the understanding and use of mental hygiene concepts. The principal of P. S. 188 attributes the lessening of racial tensions within his school largely to the work of the Bureau of Child Guidance. The principal of P. S. 63 accepts the school social worker as an essential member of his staff and in keeping with his philosophy that guidance is an integral part of the school program, he plans for the activities of the guidance committee within the teachers' working hours.

In summary we wish to stress that this program of group interpretation was supplemented by individual consultation to teachers on many children, with the recognition that for some children, clinical or casework help was required before the children could move into growth. We also wish to reaffirm our goals in interpreting children's needs to teachers through group conferences. We are not helping the teacher to handle pathology in her children but to accept behavior deviations and to create a more therapeutic environment for the child in the classroom. We have sought to further the teacher's understanding of behavior as an expression of the child's inner need and therefore to be approached not judgementally but with a disciplined search for cause and effect relationships. The teacher has been helped to recognize normal behavior expectations for different age levels and to accept variations in behavior at each age level. She has further gained in her ability to recognize quite early the child for whom she needs expert guidance and to decide in conference with the school social worker or with another member of

the clinic team whether she should proceed alone in helping the child through his classroom relationships or whether she should enlist clinical or agency help. In some instances the teacher's warmth and acceptance may go far to help a child meet a difficult home situation for which little remedy is possible. The teachers have gained in their understanding of the mental hygiene needs of children and as a result are more secure in devising their own resources for helping children to grow through their classroom experiences and relationships.

The writer wishes to express her gratitude to Miss Irma Mohr, Supervisor of Social Work, Bureau of Child Guidance, with whom she has continually consulted. Appreciation is also expressed to the Assistant Superintendent of Schools, the school administrators and teachers who played an integral part in this project.

MULTIPLE FACETS OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER'S ROLE:

# School Social Work Consultation Service with Other School Personnel[1]

Mrs. Mary J. Medler, Director, Visiting Teacher Department
Houston Independent School District, Houston, Texas

The following paragraphs regarding consultation with other school personnel are based upon the experiences of the Visiting Teacher Staff[2] of the Houston Public Schools.

We feel that values of consultation apply to relationships with parents and social agencies as well as with school personnel but, for the purpose of this paper, reference is made to the latter only.

That school social work service has been undergoing a change as to scope of work, philosophy, and general program is obvious. Casework with individual children has been, and probably always will be, the important contribution and the chief area of service of the school social work program. The work with individual children has been the means by which the program of school social work has been initiated and it gives means whereby the mental hygiene point of view is disseminated in the schools. However, increasingly, principals ask for continued school social work service in their buildings as much for what it is meaning to the teachers as for the work that is being done with individual children.

This, then, becomes an important consideration and it is in that direction that it would be well for us to explore ways and means of making school social work service more readily available to greater numbers and with increased meaning.

The focus of the school social worker is the individual child who is brought to the attention of the visiting teacher usually by the classroom teacher, but sometimes by the principal, the parents, the child himself,

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[1] Presented as one of a group of papers on "Multiple Facets of the School Social Worker's Role" at the NASSW Section Meeting of the National Conference of Social Work, Cleveland, Ohio, June, 1953.

[2] In Houston, Texas, the *school social worker* is designated by the term, *visiting teacher.* Henceforth in this article terms, *school social worker* and *school social work* will be used.

or by a social agency. Work proceeds with a team relationship with all the individuals who have a part in determining the child's welfare. Usually, this team relationship implies working with the teacher, the principal, the nurse, and in some instances, with the speech therapist, remedial reading teacher, or others.

The teacher and school social worker confer frequently as insights regarding the problem are gained and as it becomes apparent that certain adjustments can be made in the school's program, or that the child can be given greater security in his class situation or can be given specified assignments. This embraces consultation. However, increasingly, many of us are feeling that there is coming into being a service with even greater significance than we have in the past realized. This service is consultation with teachers about children who may not have had much, if any, contact with the school social worker, but about whom the teacher wishes some assistance.

The classroom teacher comes to the school social worker quite freely and naturally after the worker's role has been well established in the school. The situations frequently come up in a manner such as this: Teacher "X", after having conferred regarding John whom the school social worker has known for a period of time and with whom she is working intensively, will say, "You know, there is Julia; I am concerned about her. She isn't any great problem but I am wondering if I should be working a bit differently with her? I know something about the family background because the mother is very active in P.-T. A. here." Then the teacher will proceed to think through certain things with the school social worker. From there, frequently the classroom teacher will go to another child and say, "What would you do about this child?" and as questions are raised, often she will come back and say, "You know, I believe I will give him another battery of tests. Probably we are expecting too much of him in this particular area."

In other instances, teachers have asked about groups of children, saying, "Can I talk to you about the group of children I have now? They seem to be in constant turmoil. They are not ready for what we are doing. However, the tests we have made indicate that most of them should be able to do this work." Sometimes teachers will say, "Am I the factor in this, what is wrong?" From there the teacher and school social worker will explore together factors regarding the specific situation. Many things have come out of such conferences. If the teacher has not previously referred any of the children in the room, perhaps some child will be seen as needing regular help. Sometimes the teachers will

see the need for further tests, possibly the use of sociometric tests. Sometimes the teacher and the school social worker together plan for the children as a group with the teacher taking the lead in working out the plans. Some teachers have seen how puppets and drama can be used to advantage as the group senses its own needs. Some teachers have even gone further into the study and are learning about role-playing and how, skillfully employed, it can be useful.

Hence, we see two things occurring: (1) The teacher is talking about general planning that will make for better relations and better development of all children. She is finding ways of adjusting programs; also finding ways to highlight and enrich programs. (2) She is coming to learn those things about behavior which will enable her to make adjustments concerning individual children and to perhaps sense her own feelings in the matter.

The school social worker in such instances, is a consultant, but by being the consultant we would not imply he passes out advice. He is a consultant with casework understanding. The teacher talks through situations and finds ways and means of handling herself or means for working with the individual children in an adjusted curriculum. This working together has brought some interesting observations from teachers, such as, "Behavior is contagious", "Fatigue often enters into the behavior of children", "Acceptance is a factor not only in the individual child's behavior but also in the behavior of the entire room", "Children need to believe in themselves and need to work on their problems", "Most behavior patterns were a long time developing, consequently, they cannot be changed in a short period of time—change is slow", "If change is to take place, some of the important ingredients that must go into the change are understanding, acceptance, and satisfaction", and "Children grow from positive experiences, one good experience helps in another situation." This consultation process encourages the teachers to enlarge their horizons and evaluate their thinking and planning.

Some challenging projects have grown out of this kind of relationship. One has to do with the pre-school registration of kindergarten children. Although for years a pre-school round-up has been a program favored by parent-teacher associations, in all too many instances it became a "round-up" with failure to see the educational opportunities that could have been realized. In all too many instances, also, the teachers did not participate actively in the planning. This pre-school registration program, as we have worked in it, was initiated after kindergarten and

first grade teachers had repeatedly talked with school social workers about the behavior of children in the first, second, and third grades. Much of the concern centered around reading problems in the third grade. It was quite obvious, by studying the situations, that the problems actually started before the third grade.

Time will not permit the discussion of the details of those pre-school registration programs. Suffice it to say that teachers are seeing that the programs are helping with better adjustment of children. Five years ago two schools had a pre-school registration program. Now, at least three-fourths of the schools in which there are school social workers have such a program. Through this kind of program the teachers, principals, school social workers, and nurses increase their understanding of the ways in which they can work together and of the greater use that can be made of school psychologists and other special services.

Perhaps another project that should be mentioned grew out of the school social worker's being a consultant for junior high school deans. When children whom a school social worker has been helping enter junior high he always confers with the counselor and principal regarding them. Sometimes, the school social worker and counselor work together with adjusted programs for certain children. Sometimes, the school social worker has continued active with the family. From that kind of relationship counselors have repeatedly asked to spend some time with the school social worker who is assigned to the elementary schools feeding the junior high school in question. Two of the junior high schools are now asking if the school social workers can help with the preparation of reports from the grade schools, of junior high entrants. The sixth grade teachers, too, are very eager for this kind of conferring together. Obviously, this means that the school social worker studies with the classroom teacher the child's total record including scholarship, tests, and attendance.

The increased understanding that has come by talking through these situations has probably been responsible for the development of teacher study groups in certain elementary schools through the request of teachers themselves. In some instances, these were short meetings with the teachers each week for a period of eight weeks. Another, a longer meeting each week for four weeks. Still others have been for varied periods of from two to four weeks.

Teachers and principals have also called on the school social worker to help them set up group meetings for parents in their specific schools.

Members of the school psychological testing department ask to have access to school social workers to discuss children whom they have known other than those that the school social workers have referred for tests. The reading clinic comes frequently to the school social workers for help in understanding certain behavior manifestations that hamper the progress of a child in the clinic. They are asking if it would be possible for children who come to the reading clinic to be screened first by the school social workers. This would help the reading clinic gain a fuller understanding of the needs of the children. Special education teachers, from time to time, have sought some school social work service on specific situations. This conferring, we feel, makes for good relationships and strengthens the total educational program.

Two years ago, a Mental Health in Education Workshop for the colored elementary schools was developed. The planning for this grew out of the Visiting Teacher Advisory Council. The workshop was carried on again this past year and plans have been made for it to continue next year. A similar project is being formulated for the white elementary schools.

As teachers, principals, and all departments of the school system understand the role of the school social worker and feel that his thinking is valuable to educational planning, they increasingly seek his help in such undertakings as we have indicated. If the school social worker is to make a contribution to the school system it must be in conjunction with all other departments. School social workers have an opportunity and a responsibility to contribute to a total educational program.

Present day philosophy has contributed to the change in the use of the school social worker in thinking and planning in the schools above and beyond an interest in those children in whom she was specifically concerned in her case load. In the process of consultation, frequently, some individual casework needs are noted that might not otherwise be brought to the school social worker's attention. So, we see again how consultation grows out of good casework and also helps make even better casework possible.

The best education occurs where integration is evident. If a situation exists, as is too often true, in which each department operates as a single unit, the lines of operation running from department to specific head (superintendent, assistant superintendent, or other) and not integrated from department to department, sooner or later a tremendous

loss in effective educational program must be suffered. Where segmentation occurs, the educational values are hampered.

We feel that consultation is a way by which the school social worker can aid in integration of departments. The school social worker becomes a liaison between school departments and individuals as well as a liaison between the school and the home.

Summarizing, consultation thus employed comes to have an added meaning for school social workers—that of sharing along with giving and receiving and this process could be a means:

1. of increasing the school social worker's usefulness by making it possible for her to serve a greater number of children;
2. of affording greater opportunity to contribute to the educational program; and
3. of contributing to more effective integration of school departments.

There are some questions concerning consultation services that we should like to raise:

1. How concerned should we be about recording for this kind of service?

   To date, when it concerns an individual and is consultation only, we keep a card file only.

2. Should certain members of the staff be designated solely for consultation service?

   Our staff feeling at this point is that each school social worker needs to be used in this capacity in the schools in which he works or through the central office as calls come for such assistance.

If this type of consultation service is done thoughtfully, with a concept of social casework, it would appear that it should contribute to the sound advancement of the education program.

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